

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# The Thirty Four Eighty Man

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by Cate Furey

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EXTRACT

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**FX commuter tunnel. Woman's voice "green left weekly ... alternative newspaper ... get the latest issue ..."** A tin being rattled, **man's voice "Off the streets appeal ... get our young kids off the streets ... please give."** Young girls laughing in a group, loud piercing **laughing.**

**FX Fade in "Lee's Music"\* (plays under this softly).**

Lee:                    When I walk I think about how my body fits into this skin.

                             Sometimes it feels like every step shakes me out. Or makes me fit it better.

                             Any time I get a bit of black blue red I think I see her, Rowie.

                             When I walk, it's like this. It's drudge, or it's cool.

                             Every day in the tunnel I see this guy sitting with his head bowed down and he's got his hands out waiting for money. Once the police were there. He was in trouble.

                             And he was crying.

                             I felt sorry for him, but before I could think, Rowie's words came into my head. She would say 'useless'.

                             Perfect sense.

**FX Fade out "Lee's Music".**

**FX Fade in office, typing. A phone is ringing.**

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\* "Lee's Music" is any piece of music that represents Lee's character. Originally I used a piece called "When" by the Kronos Quartet.

**FX Phone is picked up.**

Lee: [answering the phone] Morning Council ... yeah, look  
Rowie's not around at the moment.  
Can I take a message?  
I'll let her know.

**FX Hangs up phone.**

Rowie: Useless.

Lee: Where have you been? The phone's been -

Rowie: Wayne, the new mail room guy. He's useless. Here's a  
whole bundle of stuff for level five. Jesus.

[pause]

What? – oh ... I had a thing.

Lee: There's a pile of messages for you...

What thing?

Rowie: The new machine thing. It broke down.

[pause]

Look at this. Now I have to put all of these things back in the Out Tray and wait for him to redirect it all. And who knows where our mail is.

Lee: You could take it there yourself.

Rowie: It's his job. Not mine.

Lee: Well then stop complaining about it.

Rowie: Whatever. He just gives me the shits.  
God it's hot in here.

Lee: You're so hard on people Row.  
He's only been here for, what –

Rowie: Yeah well I hated you for ages when you started.  
God you were useless.

**FX Paper rustling (Rowie shuffles through her messages).**

Rowie: Oh Jesus – Larry.  
Larry called. I knew it ...